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**** Joint Release of the Delaware Department of Justice, Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Delaware State Police, and United States Attorney for the District of Delaware ****

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**Delaware Law Enforcement Receives \$250,000 Federal Grant
to Combat Child Sexual Exploitation on the Internet**

Dover, DE – Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III, Delaware Safety and Homeland Security Secretary David B. Mitchell, State Police Superintendent Colonel Thomas F. MacLeish, and United States Attorney for the District of Delaware Colm Connolly today announced that Delaware has been awarded a \$250,000 grant to combat online child sexual exploitation. The grant is provided through the U.S. Department of Justice Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) program and will be used by the Delaware ICAC Task Force to pursue, investigate and prosecute internet child exploitation and victimization.

“Law enforcement must make every effort to protect Delaware’s children from criminals who target them,” Attorney General Biden stated. “We are meeting ever-evolving technological threats to kids head-on through the coordinated efforts of the Delaware ICAC Task Force. This funding will provide much-needed equipment and training that will enhance our collective ability to proactively identify, arrest, and prosecute sexual predators who would use technology as a means to harm our children.”

The Delaware ICAC Task Force, whose members include the Delaware Department of Justice and Delaware State Police, with support from the United States Attorney’s Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, statewide task force responsible for coordinating online child exploitation investigations and prosecutions across the state. The Delaware ICAC Task Force was formally established in June, 2007 and its members turned their immediate attention to applying for federal ICAC grant funds.

“With the support of the ICAC Task Force and the newly acquired grant funds, Delaware law enforcement will be able to do more to protect our children from the dangerous predators who use the Internet and other technology to exploit them,” said David B. Mitchell, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security. “These cases require highly skilled, highly trained, and highly equipped officers who are able to extract valuable evidence from electronic devices. This new funding will help us acquire the training and technology needed to keep pace with child predators. We must continue to identify new investigative techniques and innovative technology to intercept this illegal activity.”

Federal ICAC grants are provided to help state and local law enforcement agencies respond to technology-facilitated exploitation of children, including online enticement and child pornography. They are intended to support forensic and investigative components, training and technical assistance, victim services, and community education. These grants are competitively awarded to established state ICAC task forces that promote coordinated investigative and prosecutorial efforts.

“The United States Department of Justice is pleased to award this grant to Delaware’s ICAC Task Force,” stated United States Attorney Connolly. “Delaware now joins a national network of 56 task forces funded by the Department’s Office of Justice Programs. That network comprises a critical component of the Department’s Project Safe Childhood, which partners federal, state and local law enforcement with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and other non-profit groups and education programs to wage a comprehensive and coordinated attack against on-line predators.” Connolly thanked Attorney General Biden and the Delaware State Police for their commitment to protecting Delaware’s children from internet-facilitated sexual abuse and exploitation.

The grant announced today will be used by Delaware’s ICAC Task Force between now and December 31, 2008 to:

- Purchase state-of-the-art technology equipment and software
- Facilitate training for investigators and prosecutors to enhance their ability to combat technology-facilitated crimes against children
- Support ongoing statewide internet safety educational campaigns
- Launch additional statewide educational and prevention programs

Delaware State Police Colonel Thomas F. MacLeish stated "The Delaware State Police, along with the law enforcement community here in the First State, will greatly benefit from this federal grant. Our investigators will look forward to a positive working relationship with our counterparts from the Department of Justice as all of our efforts will be working toward the same goal- ensuring the safety of our children."

The investigative staff and forensic systems of Delaware’s ICAC Task Force are based at the Delaware State Police High Technology Crimes Unit (HTCU) in Dover. The HTCU provides technical and investigative expertise on computer-related crimes to Delaware’s law enforcement agencies. Its mission is to provide computer and high technology forensic capabilities, provide training on the investigation, threat and awareness of computer crime; and work proactively to identify computer criminals and prevent future cyber crimes.

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